



'LIGHT TOUCH' EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT ASSOCIATES SCHEME

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Student Associates Scheme, initiated in September 2003 and funded by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), is an amalgamation of the Teacher Associates and Undergraduate Credit Scheme pilots. The Scheme enables students in higher education to progress to different levels of training and involvement with schools and colleges according to their varying pre-existing commitments and levels of interest in teaching as a career.

In August 2004 the TTA commissioned the NFER to conduct an evaluation to achieve a 'snapshot' of the quality of schemes from the perspectives of the students and the schools providing the placements.

Key findings

- ◆ Overall Student Associates and teachers involved in the Scheme perceived it to be of high quality, with 98 per cent of Student Associates rating the quality as excellent or good, and three-quarters of teacher respondents (21) saying they would recommend the Scheme to another school. These findings indicate a substantial endorsement of the quality of the Student Associates Scheme and should be viewed as extensive support for the Scheme.
- ◆ The majority of teachers believed the framework of the Scheme offered a good or very good introduction to teaching and that it gave teachers the opportunity to provide an effective introduction to teaching.
- ◆ Student Associates felt overwhelmingly that their experiences on the Scheme had equipped them to make better informed decisions about a career in teaching. This was endorsed by teachers, who believed it was a chance to gain a good overview of school life and to develop the ability to make an informed choice about teaching as a career.
- ◆ All the teachers surveyed reported that they believed that the scheme providers had recruited and selected Student Associates with the right qualities. This can be seen as a strong endorsement of the selection system.
- ◆ There was a strong perception amongst schools that the Scheme was a good method of trying to attract high quality graduates into teaching.
- ◆ Student Associates reported having engaged in a wide variety of activities and on the whole, receiving very good levels of guidance. The majority of respondents reported that the experience had improved their confidence, helped them understand educational issues better, had given them a better career focus and prepared them for Initial Teacher Training (ITT).

- ♦ The evaluation showed that the majority of Student Associates were encouraged to pursue teaching as a career, whilst eight per cent decided teaching was not for them.
- ♦ Nearly nine in ten Student Associates felt the Scheme providers and schools were supportive or very supportive. However, more feedback from providers, for example in the form of comprehensive post-placement reviews and more contact between recruitment and placement, were suggested by Student Associates to be areas in need of improvement. Furthermore one in ten reported not being given the opportunity to feed back to their Scheme provider.
- ♦ There was a high level of satisfaction with the flexibility of training from both the providers and the schools with the large majority reporting excellent or very good levels of flexibility.
- ♦ More feedback from schools was also perceived by Student Associates to be a way of improving the quality of the Scheme (a minority stated that they would like more support with completing their TEP and their portfolio of evidence).
- ♦ A number of Student Associates wanted more information on their role to be circulated in the schools. This was felt to be important in order to ensure that the school and teachers were made aware of the Scheme activities and the role of the Student Associate.
- ♦ The majority of teachers in secondary schools and one quarter of Student Associates believed that Student Associate input into the classroom improved motivation amongst young people and increased their interest in the subject studied. Most Student Associates reported using their subject specialism.

Secondary findings

- ♦ The majority (90 per cent) of Student Associates reported that they underwent recruitment and selection with the Scheme provider. This was evidently effective in the eyes of the surveyed teachers as they all (29) believed the Student Associates that they had encountered to be of a high calibre.
- ♦ On the whole teachers felt well informed about the Scheme and its aims and objectives and believed themselves to be well prepared to operate the Scheme, though 19 reported having not received specific training. Additionally, in general teachers rated training and induction by schools and providers highly.
- ♦ The majority of teachers (22) stated that their schools had both trainee teachers and Student Associates present in their schools at the same time.
- ♦ Four in ten of the Student Associates found the combination of the provider training and guidance in schools to be the best preparation for placement. The levels of satisfaction, amongst Student Associates, was particularly high for the way in which providers covered the aims of the Scheme and advice on how to work and behave in a school (94 per cent). This is an area where there appears to be widespread satisfaction with the

Scheme, although it should be pointed out that one third of Student Associates felt a prior induction by the school would better prepare them for their placement.

- ◆ Three-quarters of Student Associates were matched by their providers with their school placements, and nine out of ten felt their placements to be appropriate.
- ◆ A minority of teachers felt that there was sufficient time available for Student Associates to discuss progress and issues with teachers (nine respondents) and with school-based tutors (six respondents). Most knew the requirements for monitoring and evaluating Student Associates' work.
- ◆ Nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) of Student Associates claimed to have completed their Training Entry Profile (TEP) within the academic year 2003 to 2004. Of those, three-quarters felt they had been given sufficient support. However, sixteen per cent would have liked more support with completing their TEP and 16 per cent of all those on Level 2 were not able to collate a portfolio of evidence. Again this reflects the Student Associates' desire to have more feedback from schools and providers, in this incidence in the form of support with paperwork.
- ◆ Following completion of their school placement approximately half of the Student Associates were considering applying to do ITT. One in five had already applied, and of these only 31 per cent felt their teacher training provider had taken into account their experience on the Scheme.
- ◆ The majority of teachers stated that the main advantage of involvement in the Scheme, for them, was having more assistance in the classroom. (However it was acknowledged by half the teachers that involvement in the Scheme also incurred extra work.)
- ◆ Teachers would like Student Associates to have more time spent in schools and would like communication generally to be improved between school and provider.

Conclusions

There is little doubt, from the evidence provided from the two surveys that made up the key elements of the independent evaluation, that the Student Associates Scheme is successfully meeting its primary aim. This is to increase the number and quality of new recruits into the teaching profession by enabling students in higher education to:

- ◆ Make better informed decisions about career options in education; and
- ◆ Enter Initial teacher Training (for those who wish to do so), better prepared to meet the demands of teacher training.

The evaluation highlighted many areas of achievement and also revealed a few areas where increased clarification would provide an even tighter focus to this successful Scheme, notably:

- ◆ Ensuring all coordinators and school-based mentors are fully aware and trained in all relevant aspects of the Scheme (both at Level 1 and 2), and

that other members of staff understand the role of the Student Associate within the school.

- ◆ Enabling two-way dialogue between the Student Associate and the Provider at all times, so feed back can be conveyed both ways.
- ◆ Facilitating readily accessible communication channels are open between schools and Providers.
- ◆ More widely publicising the merits of the Scheme amongst teacher training providers.

Background

The Student Associates Scheme is delivered by 46 organisations (providers) in England, including HEIs, LEAs, four schools, a subject association and one corporate company, who give students the opportunity to work in schools and colleges, in order to achieve knowledge and experience of teaching and learning by supporting teachers and young people. The content of the Scheme varies according to the wishes of each individual provider. Students can be in full- or part-time education and may be studying for their first or postgraduate degree. Higher National Diploma (HND) and Foundation Degree students can also access the Scheme. Students can join the Scheme at Level 1, where they can work in the school environment for up to ten days, or at Level 2, subject to certain requirements, where they can also work for between ten and 20 days in the school against the standards for QTS.

The evaluation conducted by the NFER aimed to provide an overview of Student Associates' and schools' perceptions of the quality of the Scheme in which they have participated.

Methods

The methodology used consisted of two questionnaire surveys:

1. Amongst staff at schools participating in the Scheme. The survey gathered the views of the teacher training coordinator and the school-based tutor concerning the Scheme. The school staff sample was drawn from 23 primary schools and 23 secondary schools randomly selected from 23 Scheme Providers. A total of 92 questionnaires were dispatched. The Providers were selected in agreement with the TTA.
2. A larger survey amongst Student Associates in order to establish their perceptions and experiences of the Scheme. The sample of Student Associates was drawn from a database provided by the TTA. Seven hundred questionnaires were dispatched to Student Associates.

Fieldwork was conducted between September and October 2004 and a total of 326 completed Student Associate questionnaires were returned (47 per cent), and 29 were received from teachers (31 per cent). There was no direct link between the students and the schools and therefore no correlations can be drawn.

1. Introduction

This report sets out the findings from a ‘Light Touch Evaluation of the Student Associates Scheme’. The findings are based on the analysis of survey data from students participating at both levels in the Student Associates Scheme. A separate concurrent survey was conducted with teachers, both coordinators and school-based tutors, who supervised students in their school placements.

This opening chapter outlines the background and the development of the Scheme and sets the Scheme within the broader context of teacher training. It also describes the aims of this study and the methodology employed.

1.1 Background

The Student Associates Scheme, initiated on 13 June 2003 and funded by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), is an evolution of the Teacher Associates and Undergraduate Credit Scheme pilot. The Scheme enables students in higher education to progress to different levels of training and involvement with schools and colleges according to their varying pre-existing commitments and levels of interest in teaching as a career.

The Scheme is delivered by 46 organisations (providers) in England, including HEIs, LEAs, four schools, a subject association and one corporate company who give students the opportunity to work in schools and colleges and to achieve knowledge and experience of teaching and learning by supporting teachers and young people. The content of the Scheme varies according to the wishes of each individual provider. Students can be in full- or part-time education and may be studying for their first or postgraduate degree. Higher National Diploma (HND) and Foundation Degree students can also access the Scheme. Students can join the Scheme at Level 1, where they can work in the school environment for up to ten days, or at Level 2, subject to certain requirements, where they can also work for between ten and 20 days in the school against the standards for QTS.

The TTA already has quantitative data and some qualitative data about the Student Associates Scheme from the providers. In August 2004 the TTA commissioned the NFER to conduct an evaluation to achieve a ‘snapshot’ of the quality of schemes from the perspectives of the students and of the schools providing the placements. The aims of the research are outlined in the following section.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The evaluation aimed to provide an overview of Student Associates' and schools' perceptions of the quality of the Scheme in which they have participated.

The methodology also sought to take account of whether, in the case of the students' experiences, the quality of the Schemes in which they participated contributed to the primary aim of the Student Associates Scheme. This is to increase the number and quality of new recruits into the teaching profession by enabling students in higher education to:

- ♦ Make better informed decisions about career options in education; and
- ♦ Enter Initial teacher Training (for those who wish to do so), better prepared to meet the demands of teacher training.

1.3 Research methodology

The methodology used consisted of two questionnaire surveys. Firstly, school staff, both coordinators of the Student Associates Scheme and school-based tutors, were surveyed to establish their perceptions of the students' work and experiences. Secondly, a larger survey was conducted amongst Student Associates in order to establish their perceptions and experiences of the Scheme.

The questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed by the research team at NFER in collaboration with the TTA. Questions about Level 1 and Level 2 of the Scheme were incorporated into one questionnaire. Similarly, questions for Scheme coordinators and school-based tutors within schools were integrated into one questionnaire. The questionnaires consisted predominantly of pre-coded questions with two open-ended questions in each questionnaire, allowing for more detailed responses on key issues.

The sample

The school staff sample was drawn from 23 primary schools and 23 secondary schools randomly selected from 23 Scheme Providers. The Providers were selected using the following criteria:

- ♦ **Geographical area** – since the Student Associates Scheme is a nationwide scheme, it was felt to be appropriate that all major regions of England should be covered.
- ♦ **Size and experience of Provider** – a range of sizes of organisations/schemes were included.

- ◆ **Coverage of organisational types** – a representative range of Provider type was covered:
 - 17 Higher Education Institutions
 - 1 Commercial organisation
 - 3 Local education authorities
 - 2 School consortia.

Analysis of the achieved sample showed that an average of 21 per cent of pupils in the selected schools received free school meals. This figure is slightly higher than the national average of 15 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

The sample of Student Associates was drawn from a database (compiled from the student data collection forms returned to the TTA by students). It was agreed with the TTA that, as the student data collection form did not provide details on which scheme provider the student was registered with, a random sample should be drawn from across all scheme providers. The sample was stratified based on criteria agreed with the TTA, as indicated below:

- ◆ Phase (primary and secondary schools)
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Level (one and two)
- ◆ Ethnicity
- ◆ Preferred subject (a representative sample of those secondary subjects in the database).

Seven hundred questionnaires were dispatched to Student Associates and up to 92 to teachers. (In the case of the teacher survey, questionnaires were sent to named coordinators. However, individual names were not provided for school-based tutors, so coordinators were asked to give them to their colleague. In some instances one teacher performed the role of both coordinator and school-based tutor). Questionnaires were mailed in late September and respondents were asked to complete them before half-term. Student Associates were reminded by both e-mail and post, teachers were telephoned and sent reminders in order to maximise responses from both coordinators and school-based tutors. A total of 326 completed Student Associate questionnaires were returned (47 per cent), and 29 were received from teachers (31 per cent). The next section provides details of the characteristics of these two sets of respondents.

1.4 Background profile of Student Associates and schools

This section provides background details of the schools and teachers who took part in the survey, along with background information on the achieved sample of Student Associates.

Schools

- ◆ Sixteen of the teachers responded from schools based in the south of England, eight in the Midlands and five in the north.
- ◆ Thirteen school respondents worked in primary schools and 16 at secondary level, six from comprehensives for pupils aged 10 to 16 years old, the remainder providing for pupils up to 18 years old.
- ◆ The teachers were well practised in teacher training, achieving an average number of 8.5 years of experience. The minimum number of years achieved was two, and the maximum was 30 years, with four teachers having 20 or more years teacher training experience. Furthermore all 29 teachers reported that their schools had previous experience of Initial Teacher Training.
- ◆ The majority of teachers (22) stated that their schools had both trainee teachers and Student Associates present in their schools at the same time.
- ◆ Fourteen teachers described their role within the Scheme as a school coordinator, six as school-based tutor for the Student Associates and nine conducted both roles. Only ten teachers had received specific training for the Scheme.
- ◆ Schools had a median average of two Level 1 and two Level 2 Student Associates within their schools between September 2003 and July 2004. It should be noted that whilst the majority of schools reported having between one and ten Level 1 Student Associates in their schools during the course of the year, one secondary school had 26.

Student Associates

- ◆ The achieved sample was broadly representative of the TTA database population, for example, in terms of students' gender, age, ethnicity and preferred phase.
- ◆ In terms of which sector Student Associates wanted to work in:
 - sixty per cent wanted secondary schools
 - thirty two per cent wanted primary sector
 - three per cent of the Student Associates wanted to work in further or higher education,
 - a further three per cent were undecided which sector they preferred
 - two per cent did not respond.
- ◆ Table 1.1 below illustrates the age profile of the Student Associates.

Table 1.1 Age of Student Associates

Age	%
Below 20	10
20 to 29	73
30 to 39	12
40 to 49	5
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Student Associates

- ♦ Of the 326 Student Associates surveyed three quarters (77 per cent) described their ethnicity as white, 20 per cent as black, Asian, mixed or from other ethnic background.
- ♦ Seventy-six (23 per cent) of the Student Associates were male, and thirteen of them had experience at key stages 1 and 2.
- ♦ Forty two per cent of Student Associates reported that they had participated only in Level 1 of the Scheme in 2003 to 2004, 39 per cent only in level 2, whilst 17 per cent experienced both Levels during the course of the year. Two per cent did not respond.
- ♦ Table 1.2 below indicates the secondary priority subjects supported by Student Associates.

Table 1.2 Proportions of Student Associates involved on Schemes in secondary schools who were involved in secondary priority subjects

Priority subject	%
Science	14
Mathematics	12
Modern foreign languages	7
Information technology	7
Design and technology	5
N = 231	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates in secondary schools

Other secondary subjects in which Student Associates were principally involved during their placements were:

Non priority subject	%
English	31
History	14
Art/Art & Design	13
Geography	13
Physical education	13
Religious education	7
Drama	6
Music	4
Business studies	3
Other subjects	10
N = 126	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates in secondary schools

- ◆ The majority (90 per cent) of Student Associates reported that they underwent recruitment and selection with their scheme provider. This figure was consistent across Levels 1 and 2 and primary and secondary sectors. Ten per cent perceived that they were not selected by their scheme provider.
- ◆ In terms of blocks of time, Student Associates undertook their placements in a variety of ways, as can be seen in Table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3 Placement methods

Methods	%
Single days	16
A single block	48
Several small blocks	10
Combination of blocks and single days	26
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Student Associates

- ◆ These figures were broadly the same across phase and Level, the only exception being that more Level 1 – only Student Associates reported undertaking their placements in single days (24 per cent) than Level 2 only Associates (8 per cent). This may indicate a perceived need at Level 2 for more concentrated periods of placement. The fact that nearly half of Student Associates undertook their placements in a single block may be viewed as positive, because a single block imparts a sustainable impact on the student.
- ◆ Thirty-five per cent of Student Associates believed that they were the only Student Associate in their placement school.
- ◆ Sixty-five per cent of student respondents reported that they were placed in schools along side other Student Associates.

2. Initial stages and perceptions of the Scheme

This chapter explores perceptions of the initial stages of the Scheme from both the Student Associate and school perspectives. It reports on the expectations of the Student Associates and on the coordinators' and school-based tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Scheme.

2.1 Ways in which Student Associates found out about the Scheme

E-mail messages and posters were reported to be the most successful means by which students learnt about the Scheme, but the information sources were diverse, suggesting that a mixture of direct and indirect targeting was successful. These and other methods are listed in the table below.

Table 2.1 Methods by which students found out about the Scheme

Methods	%
E-mail	32
Posters	27
Recommended by friend	17
Subject tutor	14
Website	6
Newspaper/magazine advertisement	6
Other	21
No response	1
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Other significant means by which Student Associates heard about the Scheme included a meeting or awareness lecture or seminar, or at an open day at a university or college (seven Student Associates), through an advertisement or flyer in the careers library (seven Student Associates), and a further seven Student Associates were advised about the Scheme by their careers officer.

2.2 Students' reasons for enrolment and expectations

The main reasons that Students chose to enrol on the Student Associates Scheme are outlined in the table below. Not surprisingly, but reassuringly, the majority chose to enrol for reasons entirely consistent with the primary aim of the Scheme 'to make better informed decisions about career options in education' (www.tta.gov.uk 2004).

Table 2.2 Main reasons for enrolment on the Scheme

Reasons	%
To find out what is involved in teaching	82
To find out whether teaching is for me	82
To add something to my CV	69
To contribute to young people's learning and attainment	64
To work with young people	55
To earn money	52
To use my subject knowledge in another context	46
No response	0
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Further analysis of the data revealed that there was little difference in motivation between those Student Associates in primary or secondary schools. However more Level 2 students cited working with young people as a main reason (60 per cent) than Level 1 students (50 per cent) and more Level 2 students were motivated by contributing to young people's learning and attainment (71 per cent) than Level 1 students (59 per cent). Interestingly earning money was not perceived to be a primary motivator.

When prompted Student Associates reported that they were motivated as outlined in the table below.

Table 2.3 Expectations of the Scheme

Expectations	%
Gain knowledge and understanding about teaching	92
Be an active participant in the classroom and in the school	89
Receive a thorough induction from the provider	77
Teach young people (with the supervision of the teacher)	76
Find the school placement challenging	67
Be involved in lesson planning	52
Interest young people in my subject	52
Receive a thorough induction from the host school	46
Be involved in marking/assessing	27
Be involved in after school clubs or activities	26
Teach young people (without supervision of a teacher)	13
I had no expectations	1
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Student Associates' expectations of teaching young people, with or without supervision, deserve closer scrutiny. Students on Level 2 of the Scheme reported a greater expectation of teaching with supervision (79 per cent) and without supervision (18 per cent) compared with Level 1 students (71 per cent and 11 per cent respectively), suggesting more commitment and knowledge of the Scheme on the part of Level 2 Student Associates.

2.3 Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Scheme

Coordinators and student-based tutors were asked how effective an introduction to teaching they felt the framework of the Scheme offered Level 1 Student Associates. Twenty one of 29 respondents reported that they felt that the framework was good or very good. No teacher believed it to be poor or very poor. Furthermore the vast majority (26) thought that the Scheme gave them the opportunity to provide an effective introduction to teaching.

Similarly for Level 2 Student Associates, 18 teachers felt the framework of the Scheme was good or very good in terms of providing an effective preparation for Initial Teacher Training (ITT). No teacher said it offered a poor or very poor preparation.

Overall three quarters (21) of teacher respondents endorsed the Scheme by stating that the Student Associates with whom they had worked had given 'a

lot' of consideration to the idea of a career in teaching as a result of the Scheme. A further five also believed that students had considered teaching 'a little'.

This would indicate that not only did teachers approve of the Scheme, but also that they believed it was effective in helping Student Associates to decide on whether they wished to pursue a career in teaching.

Coordinators and school-based tutors did not always believe that Student Associates were given the opportunity to use their degree subjects within their placements, with 11 believing they used them 'a lot', 15 'a little' and one teacher stating that their Student Associates had not used their degree subject at all. Ten of the 11 who used their degree subjects 'a lot' were situated in secondary schools.

Eleven of the 15 who used their specialist knowledge 'a little' and the one who did not use it at all, were based in primary education, reflecting the possibility that some Student Associates opted for working in primary schools even though they had a secondary specialism.

3. Training and induction

This chapter considers the views of the Student Associates and the school staff on the nature and the value of the training and induction programmes, both those run by the Scheme providers and those offered by the schools themselves. All the teachers surveyed reported that they believed that the scheme providers had recruited and selected Student Associates with the right qualities. This can be seen as a strong endorsement of the selection system.

3.1 Student Associates' views on induction and training

The Student Associates were asked what, in their opinion, had best prepared them for their school placements. Details of their responses are set out in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 What best prepared you for the school placement?

	%
Combination of provider's training and guidance in schools	43
The provider's training/induction prior to placement	31
School's training and guidance during placement	22
Provider's training/induction during placement	2
School's induction prior to placement	2
No response	0
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Not surprisingly, the most popular response from the Student Associates was the view that the *combination* of the provider's training and the guidance that they received from the schools during the placement, had been the most useful. Just under a third of Student Associates (31 per cent) felt that the provider's training prior to placement constituted the best preparation for the school placement, whilst just over a fifth (22 per cent) thought that the school's training and induction was the best preparation. The general pattern of little involvement with schools *before* the placement and providers *during* the placement was reflected in some of the comments made by Student Associates on how the Scheme might be improved, when some suggested a visit to their schools before their placements started and others commented on the lack of contact with the providers during the placements.

The Student Associates had the opportunity to rate the flexibility of both the provider and the school in their provision of training sessions. Their views are summarised in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below.

Table 3.2 Flexibility of training sessions – Provider

	%
Excellent	42
Good	48
Don't know	4
Disappointing	3
Poor	2
No response	1
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Table 3.3 Flexibility of training sessions – School

	%
Excellent	49
Good	37
Don't know	8
Disappointing	2
Poor	2
No response	2
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

There was a high level of satisfaction amongst Student Associates with the flexibility of training from both the providers and the schools, with the majority reporting excellent or good levels of flexibility. Those reporting that the flexibility of training had been disappointing or poor were small minorities, 5 per cent with reference to the providers and 4 per cent with reference to the schools. However, as the Student Associates had to balance the Scheme with their university work and, in some cases, part-time employment or family commitments, any difficulties with flexibility could be a concern for individuals and would affect their perceptions of the Scheme.

The content and appropriateness of the providers' induction training was rated by the Student Associates on a scale of excellent to poor, and for this question the responses were separated by those who had undertaken Level 1 only, both Levels 1 and 2, and those who had participated at Level 2 only.

Table 3.4 Student Associates' rating of specific aspects of their provider's training

	Aims of the scheme %	English education system %	How to work and behave in a school %	How pupils behave in school %	Working with school staff %
Excellent	49	23	49	30	24
Good	45	55	45	54	57
Don't know	3	13	2	6	10
Disappointing	2	5	4	6	5
Poor	1	2	0	2	1
None received	0	2	0	2	1
No response	1	1	1	1	2
N = 326					

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single response items

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

For Student Associates who had completed both Levels 1 and 2, the responses to each of the aspects of training listed was overwhelmingly positive, with large majorities answering excellent and good. The level of satisfaction was particularly high for the coverage of the aims of the Scheme and advice on how to work and behave in a school (94 per cent).

The aspect of the induction process that received the lowest percentage of good and excellent responses (but still 78 per cent), was understanding of the English education system, which also had the second highest number responding disappointing or poor (7 per cent). It is possible that some providers assumed that their Student Associates knew more about the education system than they actually did and so did not spend as much time on this aspect of training as their students expected. On the other hand, more than two-thirds of the Student Associates described the coverage of this aspect as good or excellent, so it was obviously not a major cause for concern.

The aspect of induction that recorded the highest number of poor or disappointing responses was on advice regarding how pupils behave in schools (8 per cent), but again there was still a large majority that responded excellent or good to this question (84 per cent).

Table 3.5 Level 2 Student Associates' rating of specific aspects of their providers training

	Standards for QTS %	Working with school-based tutor %	Guidance on completion of Training Entry Profile %	Guidance on routes into teaching %
Excellent	25	20	18	19
Good	46	50	42	42
Don't know	13	10	12	12
Disappointing	8	10	14	15
Poor	2	2	4	3
None received	1	3	6	3
No response	6	6	6	6
N = 183				

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single response items

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Level 2 Student Associates

Table 3.5 again presents a positive picture, with a substantial majority stating that these particular aspects of the Level 2 programme had been well covered.

The responses which may merit further attention are the 6 per cent of Student Associates who said that they had received no guidance from the provider on completing the Training Entry Profile (TEP), the 3 per cent who said that they had no guidance from the provider on routes into teaching and the 3 per cent who claimed that they had not received any induction on working with their school-based tutor. When these figures are added to those who rated these aspects as poor or disappointing, it may indicate that some providers are not covering these aspects of the induction as well as others.

3.2 Views of the school staff on induction and training

Ten of the teachers reported receiving specific training related to the Student Associates Scheme. They were asked to rate the training on a scale of very good to very poor. The responses are set out in Table 3.6 below (numbers rather than percentages are used for the school staff responses).

Table 3.6 Teachers' rating of Student Associates Scheme training

Rating	N
Very good	3
good	5
Neither good nor bad	0
poor	1
Very poor	0
No response	1
N = 10	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: Teachers receiving specific Student Associates Scheme training (10)

Of these ten teachers, the majority (eight) had found the training to be good or very good, while one said it was poor and one had not answered.

The school respondents were also asked a number of questions relating to how the Student Associates Scheme had operated in their schools and how their roles had fitted into the Scheme. They had the opportunity, for example, to rate, how well-informed they felt they had been about the Student Associates Scheme. Their responses are recorded in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7 Extent to which school staff felt that they were well-informed about the Student Associates Scheme

Rating	N
Very well	9
Well	15
Not very well	4
Not at all	1
No response	0
N = 29	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

The response was clearly positive, with 24 of the 29 respondents indicating that they were well or very well informed about the Scheme.¹

The teachers were asked where they had obtained their information about the Student Associates Scheme and their responses are summarised in Table 3.8 below.

¹ The response, *Not at all*, was from a school where the survey had been filled in, although it was stated that there had been no Student Associates at Level 1 or 2 and the school had received no information about the Scheme.

Table 3.8 Source of Student Associates Scheme information

Source	N
Provider	21
School	2
Both	2
Not sure about source	2
No information received	1
No response	1
N = 29	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

The providers were the main source of information and it would seem from the responses to this and the previous question, that communication between most providers and the schools was working effectively.

Further survey questions asked about the teachers' perceptions of how well prepared their schools had been to operate the Scheme.

Table 3.9 Preparedness of school to operate Scheme

Rating	N
Very well prepared	7
Well prepared	17
Not very well prepared	4
Not at all prepared	1
N = 29	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

Again, there was a strongly positive response, with 24 out of 29 respondents reporting that their schools had been very well or well prepared to operate the Scheme. Those who replied positively were then asked to specify, from a range of options, the ways in which they thought their school had been well prepared. For those who wanted to add details which did not fit into the areas specified in the question, the option of an open-ended response was available.

Table 3.10 Ways in which school was well prepared for the Scheme

Ways	N
Well briefed by provider	13
Well supported by provider	12
Well organised within school	21
All school staff well briefed	13
Materials from provider clear	17
Role and responsibilities made clear	15
No response	2
N = 24	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: Those very well or well prepared (24)

The highest number of responses (21), was for the option that the school had been well organised in terms of preparing for the Scheme. As it was school staff who were answering the question, this could be interpreted as the teachers having more first-hand knowledge of their own organisation, but it was clearly their perception that this was a prime reason for schools feeling well prepared to operate the Scheme. There was also quite a high response rate to indicate that the materials from the provider had been clear, which suggests that teachers appreciated receiving good quality materials and saw this as important in enabling them to operate the Scheme well. They also recognised the importance of having their own roles and responsibilities clearly defined and thought that their schools had been effective in achieving this.

The small number of respondents who had said that their schools had not been well prepared had the opportunity to specify how they felt underprepared (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11 Ways in which school was not prepared

Ways	N
Inadequate briefing by provider	3
Inadequate support from provider	4
Poorly organised within school	0
School staff inadequately briefed	1
Poor materials from provider	3
No clarity of role and responsibilities	2
Other	1
N = 5	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: Those not very or not at all prepared (5)

As there were only five teachers who had replied negatively to the question it is difficult to make firm conclusions, but it seems that the problems were seen as residing with the providers, rather than with the schools.

School-based tutors were asked if they had taken the opportunity to attend the briefing session, given by the provider. Four had and two perceived it to be very useful, one useful and one believed it to be of limited usefulness.

While the numbers are very small for drawing conclusions, it would seem that these sessions had been helpful for those teachers who had attended. However, eight had either not attended or said that there had been no session available. The school-based tutors who had not been to a briefing session were asked how they had received information on the Scheme and their role in it. Of the three respondents who answered the question, one said that the school's training manager had attended instead and two said that literature had been received by post. One of the latter added that the school had not been willing to release him for the briefing session.

Teachers' opinions on the relative effectiveness of their school's training and induction process for the Student Associates at Level 1 and Level 2 were ascertained, and are summarised in Table 3.12 below.

Table 3.12 Effectiveness of school's training and induction for Student Associates

Rating	Level 1 N	Level 2 N
Very good	8	7
Good	9	7
Reasonable	6	5
Poor	1	0
Very poor	1	1
No response	4	9
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

As reflected in responses to other questions reported in this section, the teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of their schools' training and induction processes were strongly positive for both Level 1 and Level 2 Student Associates. The numbers responding negatively were low, two for Level 1 and one for Level 2, which suggests a generally high level of satisfaction with the schools' preparation of the Student Associates from the practitioners themselves.

By comparison, Table 3.13 shows how the school staff rated the effectiveness of the providers' training and induction processes for the Student Associates.

Table 3.13 Effectiveness of providers' training and induction process

Rating	Level 1 N	Level 2 N
Very good	3	3
Good	10	6
Reasonable	10	7
Poor	2	2
Very poor	1	1
No response	3	10
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

As can be seen from Table 3.13 there are fewer responses of good or very good for the providers' training (13 for Level 1 and nine for Level 2), compared with opinions on the schools' training (17 for Level 1 and 14 for Level 2), and more teachers took the middle ground and described the providers' training as reasonable. However, negative responses (poor and very poor), were only slightly higher for the providers' training than they had been for the schools' training (three for Level 1 and three for Level 2, compared to two for Level 1 and one for Level 2). The teachers had a higher opinion of their schools' induction and training process than those of the providers, but how far this was simply because of greater familiarity with their own system is difficult to judge.

3.3 Comparison of teachers' and Student Associates views on training and inductions

Student Associates seem to have had a better perception of the providers' training and induction than the schools had. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 reported a strongly positive response to the providers' induction process, with substantial majorities rating all aspects of training as excellent or good if they had been involved at Levels 1 and 2 and most aspects if they had been Level 2 only.

Table 3.1 which gives the Student Associates' views on what best prepared them for their placement, revealed a larger percentage responding to the providers' training prior to placement (31 per cent), than to the schools' training during placement (22 per cent). However, the wording of the question could be interpreted as, what best prepared them *before* they started the placement, in which case the providers' training would have been seen as

more significant, because most Student Associates had no contact with their schools until the placement started.

From the teachers' perspectives, the training which the schools undertook *during* the placement would probably be regarded as more practical and relevant to the school situation. The fact that approaching half of the Student Associates (43 per cent), said that it was the **combination** of provider induction before the placement and school training during the placement, that was most valuable, suggests that the most significant point to emerge is that **the training of the providers and the schools complemented each other.**

4. Operation of the Scheme

This chapter examines the operation of the Student Associates Scheme, including perceptions of the roles of the school coordinator and the school-based tutor. While most of the information on which this chapter is based comes from the school survey, the first section summarises the way in which the school placements were allocated, and so is taken from the responses given in the Student Associates survey.

4.1 The school placements

Student Associates could be allocated to their placements in a variety of ways, as can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Ways in which Student Associates were allocated placements

Ways	%
Matched by the provider	74
Given choice of school by provider	4
Told to find school by provider	7
Allowed to choose own school	14
No response	1
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

The majority (74 per cent) of Student Associates had been matched with their school placements by the provider, while 14 per cent had been able to choose their school. Only a minority had either been expected to find their own school, or been given a choice from a list supplied by the provider. On further analysis it was revealed that slightly more Level 2 Student Associates (77 per cent) were matched by their provider than Level 1 Student Associates (70 per cent). There were negligible differences between Student Associates in primary and secondary phases.

Nine out of ten (91 per cent) Student Associates thought that their school was an appropriate choice. The highest rate of satisfaction with their placement was from Student Associates in the primary sector (93 per cent). Of those in the secondary sector, 91 per cent were happy with their choice. Responses did not vary by Level.

The 28 Student Associates who indicated that they felt that their placement was an inappropriate choice, were given the opportunity to say why. The main reasons given (with the number of respondents alongside) were as follows:

- ◆ School did not support Student Associate (6)
- ◆ School too familiar to student (5)
- ◆ Student placed in a secondary school, but wanted primary sector (4)
- ◆ Students' area of study in the school (3)
- ◆ Too far for student to travel (3)
- ◆ Challenging school (2).

The most common reason for feeling that the placement was inappropriate was a belief that the school/college had not given sufficient support and this would have been relevant to any of the three phases of education in which the Student Associates had been placed.

The second most common response was probably more surprising, as the familiarity of the school placement would sometimes be regarded as an advantage. However, for some Student Associates, familiarity was seen as a disadvantage, perhaps because they wanted to experience a completely new environment, or felt that their role as Student Associates did not fit comfortably with previous connections.

Further analysis revealed, not surprisingly, that those Student Associates who had been given a choice of school by the provider, were also those recording the highest rate of satisfaction with their placement. The majority of those who were told to find their own school seem to have been successful, recording the same percentage of affirmative replies as the Student Associates who had been allowed to choose their own school. Although nine out of ten of Student Associates who had been matched by the provider with their placement believed their choice was appropriate, there were still one in ten Student Associates who felt the choice to be inappropriate (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2 Method of school placement and perceived appropriateness of choice

Choice	Method of school placement			
	Matched by provider %	Given choice by provider %	Told to find school %	Allowed to choose %
School appropriate	90	100	95	96
School inappropriate	10	0	5	4

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Student Associates (N = 326)

4.2 The school coordinator's role

Each of the schools that was participating in the Student Associates Scheme had a *coordinator*, who oversaw the implementation of the Scheme, and a *school-based tutor* who acted as a mentor and advisor to the Student Associates. In some schools, one teacher undertook both these roles. Of the 29 respondents to the school survey, 14 were coordinators, six were school-based tutors and nine held both positions.

Coordinators were asked if they had been given information on how the Scheme should operate; 17 said they had, and five said they had not. Of these five, three were coordinators only and two were both coordinators and school-based tutors.

Coordinators of the Student Associates took on responsibility for certain tasks. Table 4.3 below illustrates the nature and incidence of these tasks.

Table 4.3 Tasks for which coordinators were responsible

Tasks	N
Briefing school personnel about the Scheme	19
Ensuring Student Associates had the opportunity to carry out a range of school-based tasks	19
Overseeing the school's assessment of Student Associates	19
Providing pastoral support to Student Associates	17
Providing a school induction for the Student Associates	18
Completing and returning the QA form and record of attendance	14
Assessing Student Associates yourself	11
Validating Training Entry Profiles (TEP)	11
N = 23	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All coordinators (23)

Two of the tasks which had the highest number of responses (19), as would be expected for personnel in a coordinating role, were briefing colleagues about the Scheme and ensuring that the Student Associates had the opportunity to become fully involved in the life of the school. It is perhaps worth noting that, two coordinators did not perceive 'briefing school personnel about the Scheme' as a task for which they were responsible. There were also 19 teachers who said that they were responsible for overseeing their school's assessment of Student Associates.

The coordinators were asked how much time they spent on their role each week, and the answers ranged from 15 hours to one hour (see Table 4.4). The majority (16) were spending between one and two hours a week on their role, which would probably have been about the average expected by the staff involved.

Table 4.4 Time in hours spent as coordinator each week

Hours	N
1	8
2	8
3	1
5	1
6	1
10	1
15	1
No response	2
N = 23	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme
Base: All Coordinators

4.3 The school-based tutor's role

Assisting the coordinators were school-based tutors who supported and mentored the Student Associates. Table 4.5 below illustrates the tasks they perceived to be part of their role.

Table 4.5 Tasks which school-based tutors perceived to be part of their role

Tasks	N
Introduction of Student Associates to departments and staff	13
Ensuring Student Associates had access to ICT	13
Providing guidance on tasks and assignments	12
Supervision of Student Associates	12
Enabling Student Associates to collect evidence for Standards	12
Signing attendance records and QA	11
Using proforma to assess Student Associate's progress	10
Provision of feedback on work related to standards for QTS	9
Enabling Student Associates to have time for reflection	9
No response	2
N = 15	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All student-based tutors

Almost all school-based mentors considered facilitating the integration of their Student Associates into the teaching staff as a prime element of their role. As would be expected, general supervision and guidance also played an important part, as did assessment and enabling Level 2 students to gather evidence against Standards for QTS. Although there were fewer responses for enabling Student Associates to have time for reflection, the fact that more than half the respondents agreed with this statement, indicates the seriousness with which the need for building in reflection time into the programme is taken in schools.

As with the coordinators, the school-based tutors were asked how much time they spent on their role each week (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Time in hours spent as school-based tutor each week

Hours	N
1	2
2	6
4	1
5	2
No response	4
N = 15	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All student-based tutors

While the majority were spending one to two hours each week on their role, there were also some who claimed to be using considerably more time than

this, and if they were also coordinators, the two roles together could be rather time-consuming.

The school staff were also asked if there were any departments or teachers involved in the Student Associates Scheme who had not been previously involved in Initial Teacher Training (ITT). Thirteen schools had involved other staff and 11 had not (five did not know). It seems that the Student Associates Scheme has encouraged the inclusion of more school staff in adult mentoring and perhaps therefore extended their skills and made the schools more likely to be involved in similar schemes in the future.

5. Levels of support

This chapter considers Student Associates' and teachers' perspectives on the levels of support they received from both the school and the Scheme Provider. The chapter first considers students' perceptions of the support they received and the opportunities they had to give feedback to the providers, and then summarises teachers' perspectives of their own roles and responsibilities, and of the support they received from within the Scheme.

5.1 Student perceptions

The surveyed students were generally very positive about the support they had received from both schools and providers, as can be seen in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Perceived levels of support from scheme provider/school

	Very supportive %	Supportive %	Neither %	Unsupportive %	Very unsupportive %	No response %
Provider	42	45	11	1	0	1
School	50	36	10	3	1	1
N = 326						

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Whilst there was perceived to be almost equal support from both school and provider (86 per cent and 87 per cent, when 'very supportive' and 'supportive' are combined, respectively), more students perceived the school to be 'very supportive'. Only a small minority felt that their schools and providers had been unsupportive or very unsupportive (four per cent and one per cent respectively).

The vast majority of Student Associates (86 per cent) felt that they had been given the opportunity to give their views on the Scheme to the provider, although just over one in ten felt that they had not (13 per cent²). When Student Associates were asked for suggestions for improving the Scheme, the suggestion of a requirement for more feedback from providers featured strongly (see Chapter 9). This, in addition to the 13 per cent who felt they had not been able to feed back to the provider, may indicate a need to have more of a two-way dialogue between Student Associate and provider.

² One per cent of the 326 respondents gave no response.

5.2 School staff perceptions

Coordinators were asked how effective they thought the support they received from the Scheme provider had been in prescribed problematic situations. Twelve respondents reported that they had experienced no problems. Table 5.2 below outlines views on how effective the support was when it was needed.

Table 5.2 Effectiveness of support received from the Scheme Provider in the following situations

	Effective or very effective N	Neither N	Ineffective or very ineffective N	No response N
Student Associates struggling to honour other commitments and Scheme	6	3	0	2
Poor attendance by a Student Associate	5	3	1	2
Inability of a Student Associate to meet deadlines	3	4	1	3
Poor team working with fellow Student Associates or school staff	3	5	0	3
Student Associates unable to work effectively with young people	3	5	0	3
Student Associates undermining the authority of school staff	2	5	0	4
N = 11				

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: Coordinators experiencing problems and receiving support from school provider

Caution should be taken when interpreting Table 5.2; the small number of respondents involved in the school survey means that the results should be seen as illustrative rather than prescriptive.

Nevertheless, the findings are useful. Encouragingly, six teachers reported receiving effective or very effective support from providers when Student Associates were finding it difficult to honour other commitments and the requirements of the Scheme at the same time. Two additional problems were identified by teachers, (though no response on the effectiveness of provider support was given for either).

- ◆ Dress code not adhered to.
- ◆ Student Associate had health problems and had not informed the provider or the school.

Coordinators were also asked how easy it was to contact their respective providers for support if particular problems arose or to discuss issues that arose (see Table 5.3 below).

Table 5.3 Ease with which contact was made with the Scheme Provider when discussing issues that arose

	N
Very easy	10
Easy	8
Not easy	5
Not at all easy	0
N = 23	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Coordinators

It is encouraging that eighteen teachers felt that it was easy or very easy to contact the provider. However, the fact that five teachers felt that it was not easy to contact the Scheme provider implies that, in some cases communication channels between school and provider could be improved.

Finally, school-based tutors were asked to what extent they thought the quality of guidance and support they received from the school and the provider had met their expectations. Responses are presented in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4 Extent to which the quality of guidance and support for the tutoring role met tutors' expectations

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	No response
	N	N	N	N	N	N
Provider	0	5	2	2	2	4
School	5	4	2	0	0	4
N = 15						

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: School-based tutors

Table 5.4 shows that, while the support from schools was perceived to be satisfactory or better, perceptions of the guidance from the providers were more mixed, with four respondents regarding it as poor or very poor.

6. Student Associates' experience of the Scheme

This chapter explores Student Associates' and teachers' perceptions of the Student Associate experience, and compares the two sets of perspectives where relevant. The chapter considers the work undertaken by Student Associates, the difficulties faced and the teachers' thoughts on the difficulties experienced by the Student Associates. The monitoring, evaluation and feedback of student progress, from both student and teacher perspectives, is also considered.

6.1 Activities undertaken

The teacher respondents were very positive about the extent to which Student Associates had been able to become involved in the general life of schools, with 27 teachers describing students as 'involved' or 'very involved' and only two teachers maintaining that Student Associates were not very involved in school life.

Student Associates reported having engaged in a variety of activities, and of receiving varying levels of guidance for each (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1 Activities in which taken part

	Took part %
Working with less able young people	83
Working with more able young people	76
Teaching young people with supervision of teacher	76
Helping with computer-based activities	72
Preparing teaching materials	70
Using degree subject with young people	61
Designing project work	53
Teaching young people without supervision of teacher	45
Helping with extra curricular activities	42
Suggesting new ideas	41
Developing particular educational interest	40
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associate Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Table 6.2 Levels of guidance received in activities

	Adequate guidance		No response %	N
	Yes %	No %		
Working with less able young people	81	14	6	269
Working with more able young people	81	12	7	246
Teaching young people with supervision of teacher	87	8	5	246
Helping with computer-based activities	75	17	9	235
Preparing teaching materials	83	11	6	228
Using degree subject with young people	77	16	7	199
Designing project work	80	14	6	171
Teaching young people without supervision of teacher	73	21	6	145
Helping with extra curricular activities	77	13	10	138
Suggesting new ideas	77	14	9	132
Developing particular educational interest	74	19	7	129

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associate Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: Student Associates who indicated they had taken part in activities listed in Table 6.1

It can be seen that 83 per cent of respondents reported working with less able children, and that the majority of those (81 per cent) believed that they had received adequate guidance and support in this area of work. Furthermore, more than three quarters of respondents took part in activities working with more able young people (76 per cent), and teaching young people with the supervision of a teacher (76 per cent), with the great majority again feeling that they received adequate guidance (81 and 87 per cent respectively).

Forty-five per cent of students reported having experienced teaching young people **without** the supervision of a teacher, as the corresponding teachers in the school were not interviewed, it was impossible to verify this. The importance of this finding partly depends on respondents' interpretations of the words 'supervision' and 'teaching', but even so one would expect this figure to be considerably lower.

On the whole, Student Associates indicated that they felt that they had received adequate guidance for the activities they had undertaken. The only exception was that one in five of those who had undertaken teaching **without** supervision, felt inadequately prepared. This is hardly surprising considering the complexity and demands of the activity.

The activities that Level 2 Student Associates took part in are listed below in Table 6.3, alongside their view on whether they felt that they had received adequate guidance (Table 6.4).

Table 6.3 Activities in which taken part and levels of guidance received (Level 2)

	Took part %
Discussions with support staff	79
Lesson planning	73
Work against Standards	70
Monitoring young people's work	68
Completing the TEP	68
Assessing young people's learning	67
Participating in parents' evenings/ staff meetings	32
N = 183	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associate Scheme

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Base: All Level 2 Student Associates

Table 6.4 Activities in which taken part and levels of guidance received (Level 2)

	Adequate guidance		No Response %	N
	Yes %	No %		
Discussions with support staff	88	8	5	145
Lesson planning	89	7	4	133
Work against Standards	82	15	3	128
Monitoring young people's work	82	14	5	125
Completing the TEP	75	19	6	124
Assessing young people's learning	84	12	3	122
Participating in parents' evenings/ staff meetings	75	24	2	59

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associate Scheme

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Base: Level 2 Student Associates who had indicated they had participated in the above activities/activities in Table 6.2

With one exception, around two-thirds to four-fifths of respondents reported taking part in all of these activities. The exception was the 32 per cent of respondents who reported participating in parents' evenings and/or staff meetings. However, these should probably be seen as voluntary activities, and in this respect this is further evidence that many Student Associates were successfully involving themselves in broader aspects of school life, and indeed

making contributions to the school above and beyond those required by the Scheme.

Teachers largely corroborated the perception that students took part in a range of activities, although the perceived level of improved understanding derived from such activities was variable, as illustrated in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Teachers' perception of activities Student Associates took part in (and perceived level of improved understanding)

All students	Took part N	Improved understanding N
Working with less able young people	24	19
Helping with computer-based activities	24	15
Working with more able young people	21	14
Designing project work/materials	20	12
Using degree subject with young people	19	12
Helping with extra-curricular and off-site activities	18	13
No response	2	8
Level 2 only		
Assessment of young people's learning	16	11
Monitoring of young people's work	16	11
Lesson planning	15	9
Completing the TEP	14	9
Contributing to discussions with support staff	14	10
Observing/participating in staff/departmental meetings	13	8
Work against the Standards for QTS	12	9
Teaching degree subject	10	5
Participating in parents' evening	3	1
No response	9	15
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All teachers

The perception of the teachers was that Student Associates had supported more and less able young people (21 and 24 respectively). The majority of teachers also felt that students had helped with extra-curricular and off-site activities, with 13 of the 18 teacher respondents reporting that this had led to improved understanding of those tasks.

Sixty one per cent of Level 1 and Level 2 Student Associates reported using their degree subjects with young people (see Table 6.1), and in the teacher survey almost two-thirds of teachers (19) believed that degree subjects had been utilised.

However, while there was general agreement among Student Associates and teaching staff with regard to the level and scope of activities undertaken by Student Associates, some teachers were slightly more sceptical about the learning outcomes. For all activities, whilst most teachers felt understanding had improved, some teachers felt that there were Student Associates who had taken part but had not necessarily acquired an improved understanding of that task.

As can be seen in Table 6.6 below, the majority of Student Associates agreed that they had been able to observe first hand what it was like to be a teacher by working alongside experienced staff (97 per cent), using their subject specialism (67 per cent) and pursuing an area of particular interest (66 per cent).

Table 6.6 **Extent to which Student Associates agreed with following statements**

	Observed first hand what it is like to be a teacher %	Used subject specialism %	Pursued an area of particular interest %
Strongly agree	65	29	26
Agree	32	38	40
Don't know	1	11	18
Disagree	1	16	11
Strongly disagree	0	4	3
No response	1	2	3
N = 326			

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

6.2 Areas of difficulty

Although the surveyed students were overwhelmingly positive about the Scheme, when prompted, they were able to identify some aspects of the Scheme that they had found more difficult than others (as displayed in Table 6.7 below).

Table 6.7 Difficulties experienced on the Scheme

	Managing own time %	Getting to know school system %	Getting to know school policies %	School to understand why there %	Feel for what teaching like %	Getting Ideas across to pupils %	Managing pupil behaviour %
Very difficult	1	0	2	3	0	2	8
Difficult	9	11	15	25	5	14	32
Neither	30	30	33	23	17	33	38
Easy	45	45	41	40	55	44	16
Very easy	14	13	8	9	22	6	3
No response	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
N = 326							

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Table 6.8 Difficulties experienced by Level 2 Student Associates

	Action advice from tutors %	Activities required by standards %	Collating evidence for standards %
Very difficult	2	2	3
Difficult	11	22	25
Neither	35	32	33
Easy	44	35	30
Very easy	3	3	3
No response	6	7	7
N = 183			

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Level 2 Student Associates

Perhaps unsurprisingly, students struggled most with managing pupil behaviour, with 40 per cent of students reporting finding this area of school life difficult or very difficult. By contrast, 77 per cent of students reported finding it easy or very easy to get a feel for what teaching was like, which is further testament to the quality of the Scheme. Of more concern perhaps, was the 28 per cent of respondents who found it difficult or very difficult getting the school to understand why they were there. This point resurfaces when Student Associates are asked for suggestions on ways in which to improve the quality of the Scheme (see Chapter 9). They consider ensuring that the school and teachers are aware of what the Scheme activities are and what the role of the Student Associate is, to be important. Further analysis has shown this figure to rise, to 48 per cent amongst those on Level 1 only, 38 per cent on Level 2 only, and 14 per cent amongst those who had experience of both levels.

Table 6.8 above reveals that approximately one quarter of Level 2 Student Associates found that the activities required by the QTS standards and collating evidence for standards difficult or very difficult.

Teachers also reported that Student Associates experienced most difficulty with managing pupil behaviour and getting to know the school system (see Table 6.9 below).

Table 6.9 Difficulties for Student Associates as perceived by teachers

	N
Managing time	7
Getting staff in school to understand why Student Associate was there	3
Working alongside teachers	3
Acting on advice	2
Getting to know the school system	13
Getting to understand the school policies	9
Putting ideas across to pupils	4
Managing pupil behaviour	12
Other	0
No response	5
N = 29	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All teachers

It is also worth noting that five respondents gave no response which may indicate that they perceived Student Associates to have experienced no apparent difficulties.

6.3 Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

Student Associates were generally very positive about the opportunities for feed back afforded by the placement schools. Table 6.8 shows that 87 per cent of Level 1 respondents felt they were able to talk informally to their contact teachers. Sixty one per cent agreed that they had been given the opportunity to review their progress through discussion and observation, though it may also be worth noting that one in four felt that they had not had this opportunity.

Table 6.10 Extent to which Student Associates agreed that placement schools gave them the chance to:

	Level 1		Level 2	
	Talk informally to contact teacher about progress %	Review progress through discussion and observation %	Be formally assessed by a teacher/school-based tutor at the school %	Put together a portfolio against the standards %
Strongly agree	50	26	25	27
Agree	37	35	42	44
Don't know	4	10	8	9
Disagree	5	21	17	12
Strongly disagree	4	5	3	2
No response	2	4	7	8
N =	194		183	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single response items

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Level 1 Student Associates (194)

All Level 2 Student Associates (183)

The support provided for Level 2 Student Associates, while strong, was not perceived to be as strong as that reported at Level 1. Sixty-seven per cent agreed that their school had given them the chance to be formally assessed, while 71 per cent agreed that their placement school had given them the opportunity to put together a portfolio against the standards. Again, a significant minority (20 per cent and 14 per cent respectively) felt that they had not had these opportunities.

Teachers were asked to rate, on a scale from adequate time to nowhere near enough time, whether they thought that sufficient time had been made available for the Student Associates to discuss progress and issues. Table 6.11 below provides details.

Table 6.11 Sufficiency of time made available for the Student Associate to discuss progress and issues

	With teachers	With school-based tutor	With peers(if more than one Student Associate in school)
	N	N	N
Adequate	9	6	12
Just about adequate	10	10	8
Not enough	6	5	3
Nowhere near enough	3	3	1
No response	1	5	3
N = 29			

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single response items

Base: All teachers

While the majority of respondents felt that enough time had been made available, a minority of teachers felt that 'not enough time' or 'nowhere near enough time' had been made available to discuss issues with teachers, the school-based tutor or peers (nine, eight and four respectively). Furthermore, some respondents described the time available as 'just about adequate'. Despite earlier indications that students were receiving adequate support (see Table 6.8), teaching staff clearly felt that improvements could be made in this area.

Teachers were asked whether they knew the Scheme requirements for monitoring and evaluating Student Associates' work at Levels 1 and 2 (see Table 6.12 below). Table 6.13 summaries the number of teacher respondents who felt that their Student Associates would meet the Scheme's evaluation requirements.

Table 6.12 Knowledge of Scheme requirements for monitoring and evaluating Student Associates work

	Level 1 N	Level 2 N
Yes	21	15
No	5	4
No response	3	10
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

Table 6.13 Ability to meet requirements

	Level 1 N	Level 2 N
Yes	22	14
No	2	3
No response	5	12
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All teachers

While the majority of respondents did know the monitoring and evaluation requirements (21 and 15 respectively), fewer knew them for Level 2, and a minority did not know them at all (five at Level 1 and four at Level 2).

Teachers were also asked what sort of feedback they gave to Student Associates on both Levels of the course (see Table 6.14).

Table 6.14 Feedback given to Student Associates

	Level 1 N	Level 2 N
Level 1 and 2 students		
Oral feedback	25	17
Written feedback	8	7
No feedback	0	0
Level 2 only		
For TEP	N/A	12
For portfolio of evidence	N/A	12
N = 29		

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All teachers

Across both Levels 1 and 2, oral feedback was the primary method of feeding back to students (as indicated by 25 and 17 teachers respectively). More teachers indicated that that they had given written feedback to Level 1 students than to Level 2 students (eight and seven respectively), while 12 of the 29 teachers reported giving feedback for the training entry profile and portfolio of evidence. Encouragingly all teachers reported giving feedback in some form to Student Associates.

6.4 Outcomes for students

Table 6.15 below shows that large majorities of Student Associate respondents felt that participating in the Scheme and experiencing the school placement had benefited them in one way or another. The most notable areas of development were improved confidence (93 per cent), better career focus (83 per cent), and preparation for Initial Teacher Training (78 per cent). In addition, 64 per cent also reported being able to use their subject specialisms in the classroom, although nearly two in ten felt that they had not had this opportunity. Importantly a minority (11 per cent) reported that their experience of the Scheme had made them realise that teaching was not for them. This outcome, in accord with the aims and objectives of the Scheme, is as important as reinforcing the belief of those who do want to continue to pursue a career in teaching.

Table 6.15 Extent to which Student Associates agreed that participating in the Scheme and experiencing the school placement had:

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Don't know %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	No response %
Improved my confidence	43	50	2	3	0	1
Given me a better career focus	42	41	11	4	1	1
Helped me understand educational issues better	41	50	6	3	0	1
Prepared me for Initial Teacher Training	39	39	15	4	1	2
Enabled me to use my subject expertise	22	42	15	16	3	2
Made me realise I do not want to be a teacher	4	7	16	23	47	3
N = 326						

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single responses

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Students felt overwhelmingly (82 per cent) that they had been able to achieve a good working balance between the requirements of the Scheme and their college/university courses. Only six per cent claimed that they had not been able to achieve this balance.

7. Planning for the future

This chapter presents Student Associates' views of the impact of the Scheme, looking specifically at future plans and the number of respondents who, as a direct result of the Scheme, considered themselves better prepared to pursue a career in teaching.

7.1 Recruitment into teaching

One of the aims of the Student Associates Scheme is to enable students in higher education to make better informed decisions about career options in education, and to prepare those who want to go on to initial teacher training (ITT) to meet the demands of that training. Completed by Level 2 students only, the Training Entry Profile (TEP) enables and encourages students to record and evaluate their progress and achievements.

While six out of ten respondents said that they had completed a TEP, it is worth noting that a quarter said that they had not completed one (see Table 7.1). It is unclear whether the respondents who reported not having completed a TEP said so because they had dropped out of the Scheme, had not been supported by their placement school and/or provider to complete one, had not got around to completing it, or simply did not intend to complete it. Further analysis shows that of those respondents reporting having not completed a TEP, 87 per cent claimed to have completed Level 2 of the Scheme. It is not clear whether this could have been interpreted as meaning completing the placement experience, in which case Student Associates may still be completing their TEPs for the academic year 2003-04, or if it was interpreted to mean completing their involvement and association with the Scheme, in which case one would have expected a TEP to have been completed.

Table 7.1 Completed TEP (Level 2 only)

	%
Yes	61
No	25
Don't know	8
No response	6
N = 183	
If yes, given sufficient support?	
Yes	73
No	16
Don't know	11
No response	0
N = 112	
Able to collate portfolio of evidence?	
Yes	76
No	16
No response	8
N = 183	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: Level 2 Student Associates

Level 2 Student Associates who have completed TEP

Of those 112 respondents who had completed their TEP, 16 per cent felt they had not received sufficient support. Furthermore, 16 per cent also felt that they had not been able to complete a portfolio of evidence. Both mechanisms are designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their progress and achievements, in addition to ensuring that their experiences on the Scheme can be considered by their ITT providers (for those going on to ITT).

The students felt overwhelmingly that their experiences on the Scheme had equipped them to make better-informed decisions about a career in teaching, and the majority also felt that participating in the Scheme had better prepared them for initial teacher training, as can be seen in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Extent of agreement with following:

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Don't know %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	No response %
Feel able to make better-informed decision about career in teaching	60	32	5	1	0	2
Of which: i) primary	61	31	4	3	0	-
ii) secondary	61	32	5	0	0	-
Participating in Scheme has better prepared me for ITT	60	25	8	4	1	2
Of which: i) primary	49	28	13	8	0	-
ii) secondary	66	24	6	3	0	-
N = 326						
Level 2 had opportunity to gain knowledge and experience that relate to Standards	56	33	4	2	0	5
Level 2 Been able to record experiences of Scheme	53	39	3	1	0	5
Level 2 Been able to progress against Standards	44	38	11	2	1	5
N = 183						

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

A series of single response items

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates (326)

Level 2 Student Associates (183)

While Level 2 Student Associates are expected to build up knowledge and experience that relates to the Standards for QTS, and to take this forward into ITT (should they choose teaching as a career), this is not an expectation of Level 1 students. Thus, although only five per cent felt that participating in the Scheme had not better prepared them for ITT it is perhaps surprising that further analysis shows that precisely half of those students were on Level 2 of the Scheme (though very small numbers of students are involved here).

It should be noted that in Chapter 6 (Table 6.2) it was reported that 70 per cent of Level 2 respondents claimed being able to 'work against the Standards for QTS', 82 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that they had been able to 'progress against the Standards' (see Table 7.2 above). Thus there was a perception amongst Student Associates that while they may not have been involved in work specifically related to the Standards, they were able to progress against them.

Further analysis revealed no discernible difference between the primary and secondary Student Associate experience with regard to being able to make a better-informed decision about a career in teaching. However, it is interesting

to note that more Student Associates placed in secondary schools agreed that they were better prepared for ITT than their peers in primary schools (90 per cent and 77 per cent respectively).

7.2 Plans for the Future

Nine out of ten Student Associates reported having an interest in teaching prior to participating in the Scheme (see Table 7.3 below). This adds weight to the evidence that the vast majority of participants were already seriously considering teaching as a career. Only five per cent of those respondents interested in teaching reported having an offer of a place on an Initial Teacher Training course prior to commencing the Student Associates Scheme. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the majority of students joined the Scheme to find out whether they might be suited to teaching.

Table 7.3

Interested in teaching prior to participating in Scheme?	%
Yes	92
No	7
No response	1
N = 326	
If interested prior to participating in the Scheme, did you have an offer of an ITT place before going on Scheme?	
Yes	5
No	94
No response	1
N = 301	
Has your experience on the Scheme encouraged you to pursue a career in teaching?	
Yes	66
No	8
Don't know	26
Missing	0
N = 326	
If yes, which sector are you interested in teaching in?	
Primary	35
Secondary	58
Both	6
Missing	1
N = 215	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates (326)

Student Associates encouraged to pursue a teaching career (215)

Importantly, two thirds of students had been encouraged to pursue a career in teaching as a direct result of their experience on the Scheme. Of these, the majority were interested in teaching in the secondary sector. It should also be noted that one quarter of respondents had not yet decided whether they would pursue a career in teaching. Within the small minority of students that had not been encouraged to pursue teaching as a career (seven per cent), the main reasons given were as follows:

- ◆ Alternative career paths had been taken (five responses).
- ◆ Students felt they did not possess the necessary attributes for teaching (five responses).
- ◆ The Scheme was viewed as an ‘experience’, and not with the intention of exploring teaching as a career (four responses).
- ◆ Teaching was deemed unsuitable as a career path, because respondents were not sufficiently interested in it (four responses).
- ◆ Teaching was deemed unsuitable as a career path, because respondents had found it too stressful (three responses).

Table 7.4 Considering Initial Teacher Training

	%
Considering applying to do Initial Teacher Training	48
Have applied to do Initial teacher Training	21
No response	31
N = 304	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Student Associates who completed school placements

Ninety-three per cent of Student Associates had completed their school placement. Approximately half of all respondents who had completed their school placement were considering applying to do Initial Teacher Training, and one in five had already applied. A substantial number of respondents were unable to answer the question (31 per cent).

Further analysis shows that of those who had applied to do ITT, almost 60 per cent had applied to their existing Scheme provider.

Of the remaining 40 per cent, the main reasons given for applying elsewhere were as follows:

- ◆ Being geographically closer to home (six responses).
- ◆ Host provider did not offer ITT (six responses).
- ◆ Preference to do a Graduate Training Programme rather than ITT (four responses).

The majority of those students who had applied to do Initial Teacher Training were unclear as to whether the training provider had taken into account their experience on the Student Associates Scheme, as can be seen in Table 7.5 below. However, almost a third of students felt that the experience had been recognised and appreciated (31 per cent), with eight respondents saying it was discussed through interview, and two reporting that it was acknowledged on their curriculum vitae.

Table 7.5 Did your teacher training provider take account of your experience on the Student Associates Scheme?

	%
Yes	31
No	14
Don't know	54
No response	2
N = 65	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates who have applied to do ITT

A reasonable minority felt that the training provider had not taken into account their experience on the Student Associates Scheme (14 per cent), with three students reporting that they had been treated as if they had no experience, while two admitted that they had not completed the Scheme at the time of application, which they felt limited its value.

Thirty per cent of Level 1 Student Associates reported that they had already applied to do Level 2 of the Scheme and a further 28 per cent were considering applying to do so.

8. Benefits of the Scheme

This chapter considers the views of both sets of respondents on the benefits of the Student Associates Scheme, for the Student Associates themselves, for the schools and for the young people with whom the Student Associates came into contact. It concludes with an overall assessment of how successfully the Scheme appears to have worked.

8.1 Benefits for the young people

The Student Associates were given a multiple response question, asking if they thought that the young people they had worked with had benefited in any particular ways, as outlined in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1 Student Associates' views of young people's benefits from the Scheme

	%
Improved motivation	28
Improved behaviour	18
Increased interest in the subject	20
Improved attendance	3
Improved attainment	14
Increased interest in FE/HE	15
No response	3
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All Student Associates

Improved motivation was the area that featured most strongly, followed by increased interest in the subject, both these impacts might be expected, given the input of undergraduates who were enthusiastic about their subject specialisms and often closer in age to the young people. The fact that 18 per cent of the Student Associates also thought that they had a positive effect on behaviour was interesting. As some of the teachers suggested, often just having another adult in the class, who was able to assist in the lesson and give extra attention to pupils, could make a considerable difference. If the Student Associates were able to improve motivation, then behaviour probably would also have improved.

An increased interest in FE/HE was reported by 15 per cent of the respondents, and this would have been a likely benefit in secondary schools as a result of direct contact between pupils and university students. The Student Associates who reported an improvement in attainment by pupils, were probably referring to achievements such as improved test results or better coursework, as it would be difficult to judge if there had been any long-term increase in attainment. It is encouraging that these numbers of Student Associates, who were spending just ten to 20 days in school, had a view that their input may have been having a positive effect on young people.

Secondary school staff were also asked the question about possible benefits on young people arising from interaction with Student Associates and they were invited to comment on the extent to which the pupils had benefited. Their views are set out in Table 8.2 below. Comments are also included from an open-ended question on perceived benefits of the Student Associates Scheme which was at the end of the school survey questionnaire.

Table 8.2 Extent and ways in which young people benefited from Student Associates

	Improved motivation N	Improved behaviour N	Increased interest in subject N	Improved attendance N	Improved attainment N	Improved aspirations towards FE and HE N
Very much	4	1	4	1	1	1
A little	8	7	7	1	7	7
Not much	3	4	4	4	5	4
Not at all	0	2	0	7	0	2
No response	1	2	1	3	3	2
N = 16						

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: Teacher in secondary schools

As can be seen from Table 8.2 above, there was broad agreement from the teachers concerning Student Associates' impact on the young people. In particular, the school staff thought that pupils had benefited from improved motivation and increased subject interest, the same two aspects which had been identified by the largest numbers of Student Associates. Several teachers took the opportunity of a later open-ended question on what they perceived to be benefits of the Scheme, to comment on the impact on pupils of 'enthusiastic, dynamic undergraduates who were committed to their subject'. One teacher said the effect had been especially noticeable on sixth formers, as the Student Associates had been, 'such good role models for A level students'.

There also seemed to be support from the teachers for the Student Associate view that they had some impact on improving pupil behaviour. As suggested earlier, the presence of even one extra adult in the classroom, especially one

who was enthusiastic and knowledgeable, could have a marked effect. There were six teachers, who commented on the value to pupils of having, as one described it, *'the attention of another adult'*. There were also several references to the advantages of young people having *'more one-to-one attention'*.

Half the secondary school teachers (eight), agreed that there had been at least some effect on young people's aspirations towards Further and Higher Education, as well as on pupil attainment. Again, the value of inspirational role models would have been significant in these areas, and one coordinator summed up the views of several others when she commended the way in which the Student Associates had provided, *'excellent role models in an area where there are, unfortunately, few'*. When the coordinators and student-based mentors were asked specifically if they thought that their pupils had enjoyed the contact with someone who was currently in HE, 18 from a total of 27 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while eight did not know and only one disagreed.

Another factor, which at least five teachers commented on, was that young people often benefited considerably from working with an adult who was closer to them in age. The presence of a young adult, who could convey to pupils a real interest in their subject and who could perhaps communicate more easily with them, could have a very beneficial effect on secondary school students.

As had been the case with the Student Associate responses, the teachers thought that the area of least impact was on young people's attendance. Yet, even here, there was one teacher who believed the Student Associate had improved the attendance of young people *'very much'* and one *'a little'*. Although such individual responses can not be seen as representative of schools generally, in a very minor way, they do indicate that individual Student Associates may have made a difference to the attitudes of particular pupils.

8.2 Benefits for the schools

The school survey attempted to ascertain the views of staff on what they perceived to have been the benefits of the Student Associates Scheme for schools in general and for their own particular institutions. They were all asked if they agreed with the statement that it was encouraging to see Student Associates considering teaching as a career option. Of the 28 teachers who responded, 14 strongly agreed, 12 agreed, one did not know and one disagreed. The responses suggest an overwhelmingly positive view of the potential benefits to schools of the Student Associates Scheme. Although accepting that not all the Student Associates will actually enter the profession,

there seems to be a strong perception that this is a good method of trying to attract high-quality graduates.

The school staff were also asked a more practical question, relating to their views on whether having Student Associates in their schools had improved their links with local HE institutions. Of the 28 who replied to the question: six strongly agreed, nine agreed, nine did not know, three disagreed and one strongly disagreed. This presumably reflects the variety of situations in different areas, where some schools were clearly enthusiastic about their links with local HE institutions and some were less sure. However, those who agreed with the statement outnumbered those who disagreed or did not know, and this suggests that the majority of schools felt that strengthening such links would be an advantage of participating in the Scheme.

School staff had the opportunity to respond to a question which asked about specific advantages and disadvantages that teachers might have experienced as a result of the Student Associates Scheme. The findings are set out in Tables 8.3 and 8.4 below.

Table 8.3a Advantages for staff of involvement with the Student Associates Scheme

	N
More non-contact time	2
More assistance in the classroom	25
Contributed to Continuing Professional Development	17
Made them more reflective about their own teaching	18
Other	1
No response	1
N = 29	

Table 8.4 Disadvantages for staff of involvement with the Student Associates Scheme

	N
Additional work	14
Disruption in classes	3
Other	2
No response	1
N = 29	

*Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme
 More than one answer could be given to this question
 Base: All teachers*

The responses show an interesting mixture of advantages and disadvantages, with the former clearly predominating. The finding that 25 teachers reported that they had benefited from more assistance in the classroom was supported by the responses given to a later open-ended question, in which the teachers were free to write their own comments on the benefits of the Scheme. In that section, ten respondents stated that the help of an extra adult in the classroom had been a particular bonus of involvement, with Student Associate assistance seen as being especially helpful with group work and special events, such as an Arts Week. The one teacher who responded to *other*, in the advantages section, explained that a Student Associate had helped with the production of resources.

There was a strongly positive response from the teachers on the benefit of the Scheme having been to make them more reflective about their own teaching. This is perhaps not surprising, as having to guide someone else through the complications of school life and the practice of teaching would present an opportunity for reflection not normally possible during a busy school day. Perhaps partly linked to this was the perception among the majority of the teachers that they had benefited from the Scheme in terms of their own professional development. Taking a supervisory and/or mentoring role, being observed by the Student Associates and taking part in assessment procedures would have contributed to their own professional development and this in turn would bring benefits to the school.

On the other hand, there were quite a high number of responses to the statement that the Student Associates Scheme had the disadvantage of involving teachers in extra work. This was perceived to be a disadvantage. Again, this was not really surprising, as any supervision and assessment of students was likely to mean additional work. For many of the teachers there must have been a fine balance between the relative advantages and disadvantages of the Scheme for them personally, but perhaps the balance was tipped in favour of the Scheme by the advantages to their schools and to their profession. The only valid response to *other* in this section was a comment about insufficient time for meeting the Student Associate's needs. The three teachers who thought that the Scheme had caused disruption in their classes were greatly outnumbered by the 25 who saw the presence of Student Associates in the classroom as an advantage.

8.3 Benefits for the Student Associates

The Student Associates themselves were asked for their views on the quality of the Scheme and on how they had benefited personally from it. They were asked, firstly, to consider the effects of the Scheme on their future plans and opportunities, by indicating their agreement to a number of statements. Table 8.5 below outlines their responses

Table 8.5 Student Associate received comprehensive post-placement review with provider

	Student Associate received comprehensive post-placement review with provider %	Student Associate was guided on how to reflect experiences in PDP/CV %	Student Associate received advice on routes into teaching %	Student Associate briefed about moving on to Level 2 %
Strongly agree	18	7	17	37
Agree	30	22	48	45
Don't know	17	18	12	7
Disagree	22	40	18	7
Strongly disagree	13	13	5	4
N = 326				

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All Student Associates

Nearly 50 per cent of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that they had received a comprehensive post-placement review with their provider, while 35 per cent disagreed. So although about half the Student Associates were presumably satisfied with the provider's feedback on their placement, there was quite a substantial proportion who were dissatisfied and who might have had to rely on the school's feedback to gain a clear idea of how successful the placement had been.

Over half of the Student Associates disagreed that they had received guidance received on reflecting their experiences in their Personal Development Profiles and CVs. As their Student Associate experience would form an important part of any PDP or CV, particularly if they had completed Level 2 of the Scheme, this perceived lack of support could be one aspect of the post-placement support system that may need reviewing.

By contrast, there was a strongly positive response to the statement on the advice the Student Associates had received on routes into teaching, with 65 per cent agreeing with the statement. Such a good response was an indication that the Scheme was achieving one of its main objectives in encouraging and helping undergraduates to make progress towards a career in teaching.

The response from Level 1 Student Associates on whether they had been briefed about moving on to Level 2 was also very positive, with 82 per cent agreeing that they had received such advice.

The general benefits of involvement in the Scheme, regardless of whether the Student Associates decided to take up teaching, were also reflected in the responses to a question on transferable skills. The Student Associates were asked which skills they thought they had developed significantly as a result of

their experiences on the Scheme. Their responses are summarised in Table 8.6 below.

Table 8.6 Skills developed as a result of the Student Associates Scheme

	%
Communication	23
Organisational skills	18
Leadership skills	16
Time management	15
Team working	14
Presentation skills	13
No response	2
N = 326	

Not surprisingly, communication skills received the highest number of responses, with others such as organisational and leadership skills also featuring quite strongly. All the skills referred to here would be those sought by any employer and so their acquisition would have been an advantage for all Student Associates.

When the Student Associates were asked an open-ended question about what they considered to be the main benefits of the Scheme for students like themselves, the two responses which occurred most frequently were; it was an opportunity to make an informed decision about teaching as a career choice (21 per cent of responses) and it was an opportunity to experience teaching at first hand (20 per cent). This comment from one respondent, captured the remarks made by many others:

The Scheme provides an accurate insight into a teacher's role. It provides hands-on experiences which could not be encountered through lectures, books, etc. In turn this strongly influences your decision on if teaching is an appropriate career choice for the individual.

There were frequent references to the insight into school life provided by the Scheme and how this had assisted a decision, either to take up a teaching career, or to decide which phase of education to enter. One Student Associate described the benefits of the Scheme in this way:

An excellent opportunity to get a feel for life in a secondary school and understand the needs of pupils in the transition from primary to secondary. It was an opportunity to make an informed decision as to whether secondary teaching is for me.

The usefulness of the Scheme for informing decisions about particular phases or specialisms within teaching was highlighted by one Student Associate who explained that:

The Student Associates Scheme has been instrumental in helping me decide on the right route into teaching. Prior to the Scheme, I believed that I wanted to teach in the primary sector. However, during the Scheme I realised that I would find secondary teaching more rewarding and I feel I have now found my true vocation.

The advantage of being able to experience a school at first hand was clearly regarded as very important by many of the Student Associates, as this remark shows:

It was an opportunity to see teaching as it happens, to be able to speak to both students and teachers in a non-biased way. I was able to see a typical day in the life of a teacher, how they communicate with and get the best out of their students, monitoring behaviour and rewarding them.

There were also quite a number of references to specific teaching skills and preparation for ITT, from those who had already decided to go into teaching, but had wanted confirmation of their decision and some direct experience. Comments on these advantages included:

I was able to help with preparing class materials and gained experience of how to manage time in the classroom.

It gives sufficient insight into the QTS and classroom management and builds up students' confidence towards teaching and working with young people.

It gave me a real opportunity to spend a concentrated period of time within a school. This allowed me to get involved in all aspects of school life and...to have proper hands-on experience by taking a whole class.

Other advantages of the Scheme, mentioned by a number of respondents, concerned the transferable skills gained, an increase in self confidence and benefits for CVs and future employment. Such advantages were summed up by this respondent:

It gave a good insight into the working world due to the organisational and time management skills being used. Talking to professionals on a daily basis made me more career focused.

There were some Student Associates (three per cent), who drew attention to the opportunity of gaining experience of teaching without having to commit

themselves to a teaching qualification. This remark from one Student Associate reflected this view:

The main benefit is that the opportunity is open to any student studying any subject. It allowed me to explore my interests in teaching without having to make any long-term commitments, i.e. doing a teaching degree.

There were references too, to the benefit of being able to see how a particular subject or specialised interest could be applied in the classroom. One Student Associate explained that she had gained, ‘*an insight into less able children with special needs and the opportunity to help support them*’. Another, who was doing a science degree, described how: ‘*The Scheme provides the opportunity to see how materials and knowledge can be presented in new and exciting ways for future generations of budding scientists*’.

The ‘*financial benefit*’, as it was described by one Student Associate, was in fact, only mentioned by just over four per cent of the respondents, and this was always as an additional comment to other advantages. How far this genuinely reflected their attitudes is impossible to say, but it does seem from the very enthusiastic responses to the other advantages already referred to, that receiving payment was a welcome supplementary addition to the other benefits which they actually rated far higher.

The school survey also asked the views of staff on what they considered to be the benefits of the Scheme for the Student Associates. Their responses matched those of the Student Associates in that they gave particular emphasis to the opportunity of gaining a good overview of school life and thence the ability to make an informed choice about teaching as a career. The following comments were typical of many others:

It gives a really good insight into school life and activities.

It gives them the chance to see day-to-day classroom management and to understand the learning process.

Being part of a school for a month really helps them decide about teaching as a career.

Also reflecting what the Student Associates had said, the teachers thought that the Scheme provided opportunities to gain experience of subject application and specialised areas of teaching and to develop skills which were both valuable to a future career in teaching or which simply contributed to their personal development. The following comments are examples of the many positive views put forward by teachers:

It provides an opportunity for the Student Associates to understand themselves as learners.

The Scheme allows the students to experience the amount of work necessary to be a good teacher, before launching into teacher training.

The Scheme provides the opportunity for young people to gain an insight into the challenges and demands made on the teaching profession.

8.4 Overall assessment

The message that appeared to be coming from both the Student Associates themselves and the schools, was that the Student Associates Scheme brought considerable benefits, not only for the participants, but also for the schools where they were placed and for the young people with whom they came into contact.

For the **young people** the benefits can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ The assistance of another adult in the classroom provided more one-to-one attention for pupils, could be helpful in promoting discipline and was especially valuable for group work.
- ◆ Young people's experiences were broadened by the presence of '*enthusiastic and dynamic*' Student Associates, who could bring fresh ideas and up to date subject knowledge. This could improve the motivation and aspirations of the young people.
- ◆ As the Student Associates were generally closer in age to the school students, they could often communicate very effectively and they provided good role models, particularly for A level students.

For the **schools**, the main benefits were:

- ◆ Additional adult support in the classroom which teachers found very useful.
- ◆ Schools could utilise the particular skills of Student Associates and their expertise in subject areas.
- ◆ The scheme provided opportunities for schools to update their knowledge and methods.
- ◆ There were opportunities for staff professional development.
- ◆ The presence of enthusiastic Student Associates could help to motivate staff and encourage them to reflect on their own classroom practice.

For the **Student Associates**, the chief benefits were:

- ♦ An opportunity to experience school life and all the aspects of teaching at first hand.
- ♦ The provision of the information and experience needed to make an informed judgement about a career choice in teaching, without needing to undertake a full teaching course or education degree.
- ♦ The provision of opportunities to develop practical skills of working with young people, contact with the education system and teacher training procedures.
- ♦ There was the chance to develop transferable skills, gain an insight into working life and enhance CVs.

In general then, the Student Associates Scheme brought a range of benefits to all those involved in it. The comments of many of the Student Associates suggested that they were seriously considering teaching as a career, as a result of being on the Scheme, and this in itself was an indication that the Scheme was meeting one of its primary aims. It also provided a valuable service for those Student Associates who decided, as a result of their placement, that teaching was not for them. It meant that they had not wasted their own time and a place on a teacher training course and, as one put it, *'if you don't like it, you still have time to head for another career path'*.

The final verdict on the perceived success of the Scheme came from a question which asked the Student Associates how they would rate the quality of the Scheme and whether they would recommend it to a friend. Their responses are outlined in Tables 8.7 and 8.8 below.

Table 8.7 Rating of the quality of the Student Associates Scheme

	%
Excellent	55
Good	43
Don't know	1
Disappointing	1
Poor	0
No response	1
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Table 8.8 Would you recommend the Scheme to a friend?

	%
Yes	99
No	0
Don't know	2
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Base: All Student Associates

Teachers also indicated their approval of the Scheme as can be seen in Table 8.9 below.

Table 8.9 Would you recommend the Scheme to another school?

	N
Yes	21
No	2
Don't know	3
No response	3
N = 29	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

Base: All teachers

Only two teachers out of the 26 who responded to the question, said that they would not recommend the Scheme and so this too, can be seen as a vote of confidence in the Student Associates Scheme.

These findings indicate a substantial endorsement of the Student Associates Scheme on the part of both the Student Associates themselves and teachers involved in the Scheme.

9. Areas for improvement

This chapter considers Student Associates' and teachers' perspectives on aspects of the Scheme that could be improved. It is clear that, overall, the Scheme is perceived to be of high quality and meeting the TTA's aims to enable students in higher education to make better informed decisions about possible career options in education and to enter ITT (for those who wish to do so) better prepared to meet the demands of teacher training, but a number of areas for possible improvement were also identified. The chapter draws on Student Associates' and teachers' experiences and identifies common concerns, some of which were mentioned in preceding chapters.

9.1 Student Associates' views on potential improvements to the quality of the Scheme

Although the surveyed students were positive about the Scheme and their experiences, they were, when prompted, able to identify some aspects which they felt could have been improved (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Aspects of the Scheme that could have been Improved

Aspects	%
Receiving feedback from school	42
Receiving feedback from provider	41
Induction by school to prepare for Scheme	33
Provider keeping in touch between recruitment and placement	27
Familiarisation with school	26
Materials for use while in school	23
Support and guidance (e.g. knowing who to go to for help)	20
Induction by provider to prepare for the Scheme	18
Flexibility to organise school placement work around other commitments	15
Materials provided about the Scheme	12
Other comments	14
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All Student Associates

Table 9.1 shows that feedback from the school and the provider were both perceived to be areas that could be improved. Interestingly, more Student

Associates placed in primary schools reported that feedback from schools (50 per cent) and providers (46 per cent) could be improved than their contemporaries at secondary level (38 and 39 per cent respectively). Slightly more Level 2 Student Associates also indicated that receiving feedback from the provider was an area that could be improved.

The most significant other aspect spontaneously mentioned by 14 (four per cent of) Student Associates was clarifying the role of the Student Associate to teachers and informing the school as to the purpose of the Scheme placements. The importance of this comment was endorsed later on in the questionnaire when Student Associates were asked for their ideas as to how the quality of the Scheme could be improved (see below).

Other aspects of the Scheme (mentioned by more than one respondent) which Student Associates observed could be improved were:

- ◆ Less observation and more involvement (four respondents)
- ◆ The timing of the placement was rushed (four respondents)
- ◆ Communication between the provider and school needs to improve (three respondents).

As referred to earlier in this section, Student Associates were asked an open question on ways in which they believed the quality of the Scheme could be improved. As can be seen in Table 9.2 below, nine per cent stated that they felt no improvements were needed and 16 per cent made no response. However many helpful suggestions were offered. In Table 9.2 comments have been grouped together in sub-categories, and in the discussion following, the sub-categories have been analysed in more depth.

Table 9.2 Suggestions for Improvements to Quality of Scheme

Areas for improvement	%
Communication/better feedback	29
Schools given more information on role of Student Associates	15
Flexibility in school choice	10
Placements more flexible	10
Support	9
Timing and length of placement	9
Better preparation for Student Associates	8
Training	6
Organisation of placement	4
Guidance with Standards	4
Mentors	3
Other comments	3
No improvements needed	9
No response	16
N = 326	

Source: NFER evaluation of Student Associates Scheme

More than one answer could be given to this question

Base: All Student Associates

Endorsing the comments cited earlier in this section, the aspect of communication was perceived to be the area most in need of improvement. Specific aspects of communication mentioned included the need for more time for the provider to review placements and give feedback (26 respondents) and the need for advice or visits from the Scheme provider during the placement (24 respondents). One Student Associate said: *‘Overall I enjoyed the Scheme but feel more guidance can be given to students who are considering teaching as a career...having mentors or providers who take an active part in getting students ..into teaching.’*

More feedback and time for discussion from schools on progress was also deemed to be necessary by 13 Student Associates. The following two responses illustrated this view:

I felt that to improve the Scheme for me I would have found it beneficial to have received some feedback from the class teachers I worked with. I appreciated that they have enough to concentrate on, and enough work to do, but a small informal chat or a report would have been gratefully appreciated.

Feedback is needed at some stage from the participating school to show what impact we have on the student, how we can improve ourselves for next time and whether or not we do a good job and have the potential to be a good teacher.

As can be seen in Table 9.2 a substantial number of Student Associates commented on the fact that more information on the role and the purpose of the Student Associates should be given to schools, teachers and pupils: *'It would help if schools knew their (Student Associates') role in the Scheme as I don't think it was always clear'*. Another Student Associate pointed out:

A fuller interaction between provider and school so that students are able to undertake set tasks without becoming lost in the daily activity. This would help students to focus on why they were on placement without being merely an extra pair of hands.

Observations on the flexibility of school choice centred on better 'vetting' of schools, careful choice of schools and the fact that the school should include the Student Associate's specialist subject in its curriculum: *'In the school I was in they didn't do sociology (my subject), which was disappointing and rather unhelpful'*.

Remarks on the need for more flexibility with placements focused on combining university and Scheme commitments: *'The workshop sessions must take into account the student's course timetable at the university'*, and *'too much emphasis on observing and 'sitting around' and not enough opportunity to take lessons, more involvement in the classroom during Level 2 such as conducting the class with the help of the teacher or mentor'*.

A few Student Associates wanted more support in the following ways:

- ◆ More guidance on TEP and QTS
- ◆ Allow teachers in placement schools to provide references
- ◆ More information on English education system before start
- ◆ Allow credit to transfer to PGCE
- ◆ Provide or send out information on applying for ITT

9.3 Teachers' views on potential improvements to the quality of the Scheme

Nearly one third (eight respondents) of the teachers surveyed made no response when asked for thoughts on possible improvements to the Scheme, and a further respondent stated that no improvements were necessary as the Scheme was already *'excellent'*.

The suggestions for improvement that were made varied. The main areas centred on:

- ♦ extending the time Student Associates spend in school (three comments), e.g.
‘Student Associates need more time in school’;

‘Fitting together the time available to the student and the demands of the primary curriculum were very difficult’.
- ♦ improvement in the supply of paperwork (two comments), e.g.
‘The TTA could have provided core documentation to support school coordinators’.
- ♦ better explanation of the aims and objectives of the Scheme (two comments), e.g.
‘I would appreciate a fuller knowledge of what the associate teacher is expected to do’.
- ♦ consistency of opportunity given to Student Associates (two comments), e.g.
‘There perhaps needs to be a move towards consistency of expectations which were, I believe, variable due to each school setting up their own programme’;

‘The consistency of opportunity between schools could have been greatly improved’.
- ♦ the need for more support (two comments), e.g.
‘We need a lot more support, contact and guidance from the Student Associates Scheme’.

Other comments, mentioned once, included:

- ♦ Students need to be more flexible about when they can attend
- ♦ Provider should pay for supply cover
- ♦ Reflection process needed with the Scheme provider
- ♦ Cut down on weekend training
- ♦ Set up a meeting before the placement
- ♦ Clarification on payment scales and plans from provider
- ♦ Bring Student Associates into schools when schools are not winding down
- ♦ Less paperwork
- ♦ More support/briefing for the Scheme coordinator.

9.4 Overall suggested improvements

There is no doubt that overall Student Associates and teachers found the Scheme to be of a high quality. The suggestions for improvement are constructive and largely involve improving communication, both verbal and written, principally between the Student Associates and schools (more feedback for Student Associates required from the schools, and schools wanting to extend the time spent on placement). Many Student Associates also wanted an induction by the school to better prepare them for their placement and expressed a view that the role of the Student Associate should be clarified to all staff in the school.

10. Conclusions

Overall Student Associates and teachers involved in the Scheme perceived it to be of high quality, with 98 per cent of Student Associates rating the quality as excellent or good, and three-quarters of teacher respondents (21) saying they would recommend the Scheme to another school. These findings indicate a substantial endorsement of the quality of the Student Associates Scheme and should be viewed as extensive support for the Scheme.

There are, inevitably, areas that could be improved and it is important that these concerns are addressed in order that the Scheme continues to be held in high esteem and carries on meeting its aims successfully. The key findings below attempt to highlight the potential areas for improvement in more detail, however, when reading them it must be remembered that overall Student Associates were very satisfied with the quality of the Scheme.

Background and initial stages and perceptions of the Scheme

- ♦ All the teachers were highly experienced and professional in the ITT field.
- ♦ The majority (90 per cent) of Student Associates felt that they underwent recruitment and selection as required by the framework with the Scheme provider.
- ♦ Recruitment and selection were evidently effective in the eyes of the surveyed teachers as they all (29) believed the Student Associates that they had encountered to be of a high calibre.
- ♦ Although all the teachers involved in the Scheme were experienced in the field of teacher training, only ten teachers claimed to have received specific training for their roles on the Scheme.
- ♦ A number of Student Associates expressed a view that there was a need for more support, feedback and more widespread understanding of the Student Associate role within schools.
- ♦ The majority of teachers (21) believed the framework of the Scheme offered a good or very good introduction to teaching and 26 maintained that it gave teachers the opportunity to provide an effective introduction to teaching.

Training and Induction

- ♦ Four in ten of the Student Associates found the combination of the provider training and guidance in schools to be the best preparation for placement. Approximately 30 per cent found the provider's training and induction prior to placement the best preparation and one in five believed the school's training and guidance during placement to be best. The flexibility of the providers' and the school's training were perceived to be

excellent or very good by 90 and 86 per cent respectively of Student Associates. This is an area where there appears to be widespread satisfaction with the Scheme.

- ◆ On the whole teachers felt well informed about the Scheme and its aims and objectives and believed themselves to be well prepared to operate the Scheme, though 19 reported having not received specific training. Interestingly, according to Student Associates, information on the Scheme was not always conveyed to all teaching staff in the school as some staff members were unclear as to the role of the Student Associate.
- ◆ In general teachers rated training and induction by schools and providers highly, with only two or three teachers rating the effectiveness of schools or providers to be poor or very poor.

Operation of the Scheme

- ◆ Three-quarters of Student Associates were matched by their providers with their school placements, and nine out of ten felt these matchings to be appropriate. Ten per cent however did not, for various reasons.
- ◆ In line with the fact that 19 teachers claimed not to have received any specific training about the Scheme, five coordinators maintained that they had not received information on how the Scheme should operate in their school.
- ◆ Although 19 out of 23 coordinators felt that briefing school personnel about the Scheme, ensuring Student Associates had the opportunity to carry out a range of school based tasks and overseeing the school's assessment of Student Associates, were tasks for which they were responsible, four did not. This is perhaps an area where better clarification would benefit teachers and ultimately Student Associates.

Support

- ◆ Nearly nine in ten Student Associates felt the Scheme providers and schools were supportive or very supportive. However, one in ten was not given the opportunity to feed back to their Scheme provider and, as more feedback from the provider was a suggested improvement to the Scheme, it may indicate the need for more two way dialogue between the Student Associates and the Scheme providers.
- ◆ Although half of the coordinators experienced no problems when trying to communicate with providers, and the majority of those that did, felt that the support received was effective or very effective, five did not find it easy. So, for these few, communication between the Scheme provider and the school could be improved.

Experience of the Student Associates Scheme

- ◆ Student Associates reported having engaged in a wide variety of activities and on the whole, receiving very good levels of guidance. Most Student Associates reported using their subject specialism, but one in five felt they

had not, possibly due to being placed in a primary school or a secondary school without their specialism.

- ◆ Student Associates found managing pupil behaviour and ensuring that the school knew why they were there to be the most difficult tasks. Teachers echoed these findings; the first is possibly inevitable whereas the second could easily be tackled. Approximately one quarter of Level 2 Student Associates reported finding difficulties with activities required by Standards and collating evidence for Standards.
- ◆ A minority of teachers felt that there was sufficient time available for Student Associates to discuss progress and issues with teachers (nine respondents) and with school-based tutors (six respondents). Most knew the requirements for monitoring and evaluating Student Associates' work, but more support could be made available for making all teachers aware and for ensuring they felt able to meet those requirements.
- ◆ Student Associates reported that the experience had improved their confidence (95 per cent), helped them understand educational issues better (92 per cent), given them a better career focus (85 per cent) and prepared them for ITT (80 per cent).

Future Plans

- ◆ Nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) of Student Associates claimed to have completed their Training Entry Profile (TEP) within the academic year 2003 to 2004. Of those three-quarters felt they had been given sufficient support. Sixteen per cent would have liked more support with completing their TEP and 16 per cent of all those on Level 2 were not able to collate a portfolio of evidence. Again this reflects the Student Associates' desire to have more feedback from schools and providers, in this incidence in the form of support with paperwork.
- ◆ Student Associates felt overwhelmingly (92 per cent) that their experiences on the Scheme had equipped them to make better informed decisions about a career in teaching and the majority (85 per cent) believed that participating in the Scheme had better prepared them for ITT.
- ◆ Nine out of ten Student Associates were interested in teaching prior to enrolment on the Scheme, and as only five per cent had an ITT offer prior to the Scheme, it may be assumed that the majority joined the Scheme to find out whether they would be suited to teaching. Two-thirds found the experience on the Scheme had indeed encouraged them to pursue teaching as a career, a quarter were still undecided, whilst eight per cent decided teaching was not for them.
- ◆ Approximately half of the Student Associates who had completed their school placement were considering applying to do ITT. One in five had already applied. Only 31 per cent felt their teacher training provider had taken into account their experience on the Scheme. This indicates the need to more widely publicise the merits of the Scheme amongst teacher training providers.

Benefits of the Scheme

- ◆ One quarter of Student Associates and the majority of teachers in secondary schools believed that Student Associate input into the classroom improved motivation amongst young people and increased their interest in the subject studied.
- ◆ There was a strong perception amongst schools that the Scheme was a good method of trying to attract high quality graduates into teaching.
- ◆ The majority of teachers (25) stated that the main advantage of involvement in the Scheme was having more assistance in the classroom. It was acknowledged by fourteen that involvement in the Scheme also incurred extra work.
- ◆ Two thirds (65 per cent) of Student Associates reported that they had received advice on how to progress into teaching and 82 per cent confirmed they had been briefed about moving on to Level 2. However 53 per cent felt that they had not received guidance on reflecting their experience in their Personal development Profile and their CVs. This is one aspect of post-placement support system that may need reviewing.
- ◆ There was a considerable level of agreement between Student Associates and teachers on the benefits of the Scheme. The main benefits of the Scheme from the Student Associate perspective were having the opportunity to make an informed decision about teaching as a career choice (21 per cent) and the opportunity to experience teaching first hand (20 per cent). This was endorsed by teachers, who believed it was a chance to gain a good overview of school life and to develop the ability to make an informed choice about teaching as a career.

Suggested Improvements

- ◆ When prompted Student Associates identified more feedback from providers was one of the main suggested improvements (41 per cent), and in response to another question, almost one third (29 per cent) expressed a wish for improved communication and feed back.
One third also felt they had not received a comprehensive post-placement review with their provider. One quarter suggested that more contact from the provider between recruitment and placement would be useful.
- ◆ More feedback from schools was also perceived to be a necessary improvement cited by 42 per cent of Student Associates and one third felt a prior induction by the school would help prepare them for the Scheme.
- ◆ Student Associates also wanted more information on the role of the Student Associate to be circulated in the schools (15 per cent).
- ◆ Teachers would like Student Associates to have more time spent in schools and would like communication generally to be improved between school and provider.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, all of these suggestions were made in a context of high levels of satisfaction with the Scheme overall. There is little doubt, from the evidence provided from the two surveys that made up the key elements of the independent evaluation, that the Student Associates Scheme is successfully meeting its desired aims.