

Institutional Reform of Colleges of Education

Colleges of Education are undergoing a transition from being closely managed by the Ghana Education Service to being autonomous tertiary institutions. Several challenges have emerged during this process, particularly connected with the relationship between Colleges of Education and the bodies that control aspects of their governance.

This briefing summarises the principal challenges that Colleges of Education have encountered during the transition to autonomy. It identifies measures required to address each and proposes next steps to facilitate the implementation of these measures. The briefing is based on document analysis and interviews conducted for T-TEL. A full report of the findings of the research is available.

Overview of current practice

The legacy of previous institutional arrangements for teacher training still has a significant influence on the current governance of Colleges of Education (CoEs), needing clarity with newer bodies. Before the introduction of the Colleges of Education Act, 2012 (ACT 847), Teacher Training Colleges, which preceded CoEs, were closely integrated with the Ghana Education Services (GES) – particularly the Teacher Education Division (TED) – and the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Now, other bodies are expected to take on responsibilities for accreditation, governance and regulation of CoEs as they become tertiary and more autonomous. Yet the close relationships between CoEs and the GES, especially related to the recruitment of staff, have continued.

This has led to several specific challenges, which need to be addressed if CoEs are to become autonomous tertiary institutions:

Confusion between roles of GES and NCTE

GES and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) put together a joint team to manage the transitional arrangements after the Colleges of Education Act was passed. Two years on, there is a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of GES and the NCTE. One area of particular concern is financing of CoEs. Both GES and NCTE channel Ministry of Education funding to colleges. NCTE takes responsibility for services and investments, while GES continues to be responsible for staff emoluments. This has created confusion about which body has overall responsibility for funding CoEs. Similarly, while NCTE appoints principals to CoEs, this is still done in collaboration with GES, creating further confusion about the responsibilities of each body. These transitional arrangements should have a cut-off date after which NCTE assumes sole responsibility for funding and regulating CoEs.

Leadership from NCTE could be stronger

A lack of appropriate structures and staffing in NCTE has been identified as a further potential threat to the successful transformation of CoEs. There is a perception of insufficient institutional capacity in place for managing CoEs within NCTE, leading to further confusion about whether NCTE or GES have principal responsibility for the governance of CoEs.

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College Councils lack influence

College Councils have been established by law as the governing boards of CoEs, and some have recently been inaugurated. It is expected that Councils will be empowered to have full influence and control in driving the transformation of CoEs. College Councils should take on responsibility for staff appointments, funding, curriculum and internal quality assurance.

Relationship with UCC is a concern for some colleges

UCC is responsible for curriculum development, review and assessment, and the award of certificates for all CoEs. The relationship between UCC and the CoEs in respect of examination, assessment and award of certificates is a concern. Some CoEs would prefer to affiliate with other universities, but do not currently have the freedom to do so. There may be a benefit in CoEs becoming flexible to affiliate to a wider range of universities, with these institutions taking on responsibility for curriculum and assessment of affiliated CoEs.

Need for improved link between accreditation and training

There is a risk that training for CoEs does not always match their needs. Currently, NCTE and the Institute of Education (IOE) of UCC provide training for CoEs, while the National Accreditation Board (NAB) provides accreditation, quality checks and suggestions for improving governance. There is a need for greater collaboration between these bodies to ensure they work closely to support the transformation of CoEs.

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Lack of coherence between teacher training and employment

The National Teaching Council (NTC) is the new body responsible for ensuring teacher training is focused on the needs of schools, but it currently does not have a role in the transformation of CoEs. Unless this is addressed, there is a risk that there will be insufficient coherence between teacher training and teacher employment. The competencies framework under development by NTC should be assessed to ensure it meets national needs, and, if appropriate, used to develop CoEs' curricula. Professional development of teachers in schools should become a joint responsibility of CoEs, NTC and affiliated universities.

These recommendations are reflected in Table 1, which summarises the changes in responsibilities for aspects of CoEs' functions at four stages in their transition to full autonomy:

Table 1: Summary of responsibilities during the transition of CoEs to full autonomy

Function	Before transition	Current status	In transition to autonomy (2015-2020)	Fully autonomous tertiary institutions (from 2020-2025)
Governance	GES (TED)	NCTE & GES	College Council, with support from NCTE	College Council
Appointment of principals	GES (TED)	NCTE & GES	College Council, with support from affiliated institutions	College Council
Appointment of tutors	GES (TED)	GES	College Council, with support from affiliated institutions	College Council
Regulatory policies	GES	NCTE	NCTE & College Council	NCTE (external regulation); College Council (internal policies)
Funding	GES (TED)	NCTE & GES	NCTE	NCTE
Quality assurance	GES (TED)	NAB	NAB & internal quality assurance, with support from affiliated institutions	NAB & internal quality assurance, with support from affiliated institutions
Curriculum & assessment	UCC	UCC	CoE, with support from affiliated institutions	CoE, with support from affiliated institutions
Affiliated institutions	UCC	UCC	UCC, University of Education (UEW) & others	UCC, UEW & others

Next steps

- To ensure CoEs can become autonomous tertiary institutions, a Roadmap should be developed that is focused on addressing the challenges identified in this briefing, and the Transition Committee should be provided with appropriate resources and motivation to complete the relevant tasks. This Roadmap should be developed by NCTE as a priority, in consultation with the CoEs. T-TEL can support this work.
- In addition, there may be a need initially to focus the transition on a core group of better-performing colleges, which could demonstrate success, and lead small groups of other colleges through the transition. T-TEL could support this process, although will require resources from the Ministry to do so.
- T-TEL can also support the process of assessing the competencies framework under development by NTC, and ensuring that the curricula of CoEs reflect these competencies.

